

Kmart neighbors criticize site landscaping - Commercial Appeal, The (Memphis, TN) - August 24, 1995 - page NT1

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A firm says it has spent more than \$125,000 on landscaping at the new Super Kmart Center in Raleigh, but some upset neighbors say it missed an area near their homes.

The huge store - 178,176 square feet and 600 employees - opened at **3201 Austin Peay** Aug. 7. Much of its mammoth parking lot is bordered by a solid stand of newly planted Bermuda grass, as well as scores of new trees.

However, some Powers Road residents on one side of the store are unhappy that a tall new fence shields only six of the 10 houses overlooking the store, and that the landscaping goes only about halfway up the slope to their property line. They also are concerned that a vacant area near the intersection of Hanna and Powers will remain uncut and not maintained.

"This makes the whole neighborhood look ugly; it lowers the property values," George Alekos said, pointing to the tall grass on the vacant land and the underbrush beneath a stand of mature trees. Alekos owns the houses at 3252 and 3256 Powers, but lives in East Memphis. The trees grow on a slope between his houses and the store parking lot.

Alekos collected about 25 names on a petition sent to Kmart officials in June. The petition asked that the fence be extended to all the houses on Powers Road; that dead trees, fallen branches, weeds, vines, bushes and debris be cleaned out of the wooded area; that a 6-foot-wide swath behind the fence be cleared to help preserve the fence and make it easier to maintain; that the wooded area be graded; that grass be sodded across the entire area bordering Powers Road residences; and that regular landscape maintenance be performed.

Since the petition, Noddle Development Co. of Omaha, Neb., removed much of the debris and cut the grass and underbrush. But the grass has grown tall once again.

Noddle has built several Super Kmart Centers for Kmart, owns the store-site property in Raleigh and was developer of the entire project.

Jeff Kirshenbaum, construction manager for Noddle, said of the neighbors' concerns, "What we've done is well above and beyond what we've been required to do" by Kmart and city officials.

Kirshenbaum's assessment is backed by Allen Medlock, chief building inspector for Memphis and Shelby County.

After sending a senior inspector to compare the landscaping with what the Office of Planning and Development required, Medlock said, "As far as we're concerned, at this point they've done what

was required and then some."

Originally, Noddle completed the fence behind some Powers Road residences last fall. However, Kmart officials asked Noddle to extend the fence some more to hide deteriorated fences behind some of the homes.

The new fence will not extend to the last four houses because they are already shielded by the grove of trees, Kirshenbaum said.

Responding to residents' requests, Noddle this summer spent nearly \$10,000 cleaning up debris and underbrush from beneath the trees and in the vacant area at Powers and Hanna, Kirshenbaum said.

The reason the grass has grown tall since, he said, is that he is still looking for someone with a tractor-mower who will keep the area cut. "If we say we're going to do something, we're going to do it."

Trying to extend the stand of Bermuda up the slope and under the trees to the property line would be futile, Kirshenbaum said.

"You can't carry it through the trees. You'd never get grass to grow through the trees. It would not be of any value. (The residents) can't see the grass there, anyway."

Medlock said his office will ask Kmart "nicely" if it would extend the fence to shield the rest of the houses since neighbors are complaining.

"Anything we get would be out of the goodness of Kmart's heart," Medlock said.

CITATION (MLA STYLE)

Jr. The Commercial Appeal, Tom Bailey. "Kmart neighbors criticize site landscaping." *The Commercial Appeal*, Final ed., sec. Neighbors, 24 Aug. 1995, p. NT 1. *NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current*, infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/0EAF95193B22EE2D. Accessed 6 Sept. 2020.

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